

I Claim:

1. In combination with an airbag module having an airbag and a gas generator assigned to the airbag, a housing configuration, comprising:

a housing having an airbag-accommodating space and a gas-generator-accommodating space formed therein;

said housing having a housing wall with an airbag outlet opening formed therein and having a covering device, said covering device being configured to close said airbag outlet opening when the airbag module is in a non-activated basic position and to open up said airbag outlet opening so that the airbag deploys freely when the airbag module is in an activated state;

said gas-generator-accommodating space accommodating the gas generator, said airbag-accommodating space accommodating the airbag such that the airbag is disposed folded up in said airbag-accommodating space behind said covering device when the airbag module is in the non-activated basic position;

said airbag outlet opening defining an airbag outlet opening plane, said airbag-accommodating space being situated, with reference to the airbag outlet opening plane, laterally next to said gas-generator-accommodating space;

said housing having a lower housing wall region disposed opposite said covering device and bounding said airbag-accommodating space;

said housing having a gas-generator-accommodating-space housing wall extending substantially parallel to said lower housing wall region;

a partition wall separating said airbag-accommodating space from said gas-generator-accommodating space, said partition wall extending in a direction away from said upper housing wall into an interior of said housing as far as said lower housing wall region;

said lower housing wall region and said gas-generator-accommodating-space housing wall together forming a gas-duct segment configured such that gas is guided along an airbag emergence direction away from a housing side opposite the airbag outlet opening plane and into the airbag; and

said gas duct segment being disposed in said housing on the housing side opposite the airbag outlet opening plane, said gas duct segment extending substantially parallel to said airbag outlet opening plane and extending, when viewed in

cross section through said housing, from said gas-generator-accommodating space to said airbag-accommodating space.

2. The housing configuration according to claim 1, including:

a gas duct having a gas-duct end segment forming a gas distributor;

said gas-duct end segment protruding as a pillar into a substantially central region of said airbag-accommodating space, when viewed in cross section, such that said gas-duct end segment extends from below substantially into a center of the airbag being folded up in said airbag-accommodating space in order to introduce gas centrally; and

said gas distributor having at least one gas blow-out opening formed therein for a flow of gas into the airbag.

3. The housing configuration according to claim 1, including:

a gas duct having a gas-duct end segment protruding from said lower housing wall region and forming a gas distributor; and

said gas distributor having at least one gas blow-out opening formed on an end side of said gas distributor in order to

direct a flow of gas in a direction toward said covering device such that gas flows in the airbag emergence direction.

4. The housing configuration according to claim 1, wherein:

said housing has a substantially rectangular cross section;
and

said airbag-accommodating space and said gas-generator-accommodating space provided in said housing each have a substantially rectangular cross section and are separated from one another by said partition wall as a common wall therebetween.

5. The housing configuration according to claim 2, wherein said gas distributor adjoins said gas-duct segment and extends substantially vertically upward into said airbag-accommodating space such that said gas duct is a substantially L-shaped gas duct.

6. The housing configuration according to claim 1, including a gas duct having a gas-duct end segment protruding from said lower housing wall region and forming a gas distributor, said gas distributor being configured as an integral part of said lower housing wall region and extending, when viewed in cross section, as a double-walled part from said lower housing wall

region disposed opposite said covering device, upward into said airbag-accommodating space.

7. The housing configuration according to claim 1, including:

a gas duct having a gas-duct end segment protruding from said lower housing wall region and forming a gas distributor;

said gas duct segment has a gas-duct mouth at said lower housing wall region opposite said covering device; and

said gas distributor is a separate component fastened at said gas-duct mouth.

8. The housing configuration according to claim 7, wherein said gas distributor is fastened in a gas tight manner to said lower housing wall region at said gas-duct mouth.

9. The housing configuration according to claim 7, wherein said gas distributor is selected from a group consisting of a plurality of gas distributors having at least one of respectively different numbers of gas blow-out openings and respectively different gas blow-out opening geometries.

10. The housing configuration according to claim 7, wherein:

said gas distributor has latching devices; and

said lower housing wall region has mating latching devices at said gas-duct mouth for releasably latching to said latching devices.

11. The housing configuration according to claim 1, including:

a gas duct having a gas-duct end segment protruding from said lower housing wall region and forming a gas distributor;

said gas distributor extending in said airbag-accommodating space such that a gap clearance is provided between said gas distributor and said covering device and such that said gas distributor divides said airbag-accommodating space substantially in half when viewed in cross section, into left and right airbag-accommodating-space portions; and

said left and said right airbag-accommodating-space portions accommodating a respective folded portion of said airbag.

12. The housing configuration according to claim 11, wherein said airbag has a fabric layer spanning from said left airbag-accommodating-space portion to said right airbag-accommodating-space portion.

13. The housing configuration according claim 1, wherein:

said lower housing wall region has edge regions disposed opposite from one another, when viewed in cross section; and

said airbag is fastened in a gastight manner to said edge regions of said lower housing wall region.

14. The housing configuration according to claim 1, including:

a gas duct having a gas-duct end segment protruding from said lower housing wall region and forming a gas distributor;

said housing having a longitudinal extent defining a longitudinal direction; and

at least one of said gas duct and said gas distributor extending in the longitudinal direction along at least a part of the longitudinal extent of said housing.

15. The housing configuration according to claim 1, wherein:

said housing has an open end side for access into said gas-generator-accommodating space and said airbag-accommodating space; and

end side cover parts close said open end side of said housing when said airbag module is installed.

16. The housing configuration according to claim 15, wherein said end side cover parts close said open end side of said housing in a gastight manner.

17. The housing configuration according to claim 15, wherein said end side cover parts are screwed to said housing.

18. The housing configuration according to claim 1, wherein:

said airbag outlet opening has an edge region; and

said covering device is a cover secured to said edge region of said airbag outlet opening.

19. The housing configuration according to claim 18, wherein said cover is pivotably coupled to said edge region of said airbag outlet opening.

20. The housing configuration according to claim 18, wherein said cover is releasably latched to said edge region of said airbag outlet opening.

21. The housing configuration according to claim 1, wherein said airbag outlet opening in said upper housing wall extends substantially entirely over said airbag-accommodating space.

22. The housing configuration according to claim 1, wherein said housing is an extruded housing.

23. The housing configuration according to claim 1, including:

a gas duct having a gas-duct end segment protruding from said lower housing wall region and forming a gas distributor; and

said airbag module, when in the activated state, producing a flow of gas introduced via said gas duct from below into the airbag and inflating the airbag such that the air bag exerts a lift-off force on said covering device and, the flow of gas being directed via said gas duct in the airbag emergence direction exerting an additional lift-off force on said covering device.

24. In combination with a motor vehicle having a windshield, an occupant protection device, comprising:

a front passenger airbag module installed near the windshield, said front passenger airbag module having an airbag and a gas generator assigned to said airbag;

a housing having an airbag-accommodating space and a gas-generator-accommodating space formed therein;

said housing having a housing wall with an airbag outlet opening formed therein and having a covering device, said covering device being configured to close said airbag outlet opening when said front passenger airbag module is in a non-activated basic position and to open up said airbag outlet opening so that said airbag deploys freely when said front passenger airbag module is in an activated state;

said gas-generator-accommodating space accommodating said gas generator, said airbag-accommodating space accommodating said airbag such that said airbag is disposed folded up in said airbag-accommodating space behind said covering device when said front passenger airbag module is in the non-activated basic position;

said airbag outlet opening defining an airbag outlet opening plane, said airbag-accommodating space being situated, with reference to the airbag outlet opening plane, laterally next to said gas-generator-accommodating space;

said housing having a lower housing wall region disposed opposite said covering device and bounding said airbag-accommodating space;

said housing having a gas-generator-accommodating-space housing wall extending substantially parallel to said lower housing wall region;

a partition wall separating said airbag-accommodating space from said gas-generator-accommodating space, said partition wall extending in a direction away from said upper housing wall into an interior of said housing as far as said lower housing wall region;

said lower housing wall region and said gas-generator-accommodating-space housing wall together forming a gas-duct segment configured such that gas is guided along an airbag emergence direction away from a housing side opposite the airbag outlet opening plane and into the airbag; and

said gas duct segment being disposed in said housing on the housing side opposite the airbag outlet opening plane, said gas duct segment extending substantially parallel to said airbag outlet opening plane and extending, when viewed in cross section through said housing, from said gas-generator-accommodating space to said airbag-accommodating space.